

Translation and Friendship – Traduire l'amitié, penser la traduction

3-5 June 2027, Montpellier

ReSO and EMMA, Université de Montpellier Paul-Valéry, France

Friendship is one of the joys of life, and so is translation, at least for some humans. But friendship is also, in fact, an indispensable part of life, and the same can be said where translation is concerned. True, many people may not spend much time thinking about the latter but, in one or another of its numerous forms, translation is nonetheless likely to be omnipresent and vital in their personal or professional contexts.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines friendship as a “state of enduring affection, esteem, intimacy, and trust between two people”, while the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* starts its entry on friendship by calling it a “distinctively personal relationship”. The words ‘relationship’ and ‘personal’ are particularly important, especially at this moment in time.

Both translation and friendship have been discussed and, above all, lived, for hundreds of years and, indeed, for millennia. They can be found around the world, across cultures and throughout history. Both are dyadic in nature and can be conceptualised as bonds or ties. Obviously, not all the keywords that come to mind in relation to friendship apply to translation, or the other way around, but some do: commitment, loyalty, trust, and choice. Perhaps one notable difference is, in most cases, the lack of reciprocity, in translation. Friendship is, typically, egalitarian in nature, in the sense that the parties involved have the same or a comparable degree of authority or power, and there is mutual care and support, adjustment, companionship, and the opportunity to self-reveal. Friendship is a form of love, and out of the three Ancient Greek words for ‘love’ – *eros*, *philia*, and *agape* – , the one that seems the best fit is *philia*, which designates a friendly feeling towards one’s friends and also to other people such as members of one’s family, neighbours, colleagues, and even strangers. In Book VIII of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle made a distinction between three types of friendship: based on pleasure, on utility, or on virtue. While the former two suggest a rather fleeting and less disinterested attitude towards the other person, the third and highest form of friendship takes the discussion in the realm of moral concerns and it is at this level that the parties involved can contribute in the best possible way to shaping who they are, as well as the relationship itself.

What happens when we place translation and friendship alongside one another? What is each able to reveal about the other? Can translation and the relationships between translator and author, translator and reader/spectator, translator and client, translator and other translators, experienced translator and apprentice, be approached through concepts traditionally associated with friendship, shedding new light on translation as an interpersonal, ethical, and social practice? Can translation create and preserve a relationship, repair it, transform it, or even bring it to an end?

The relationship between translation and friendship may be one of affinity, cooperation, and mutual enrichment, of course, but it can also involve tension and conflict. Trust may coexist with suspicion and rivalry, loyalty with competing loyalties, intimacy with distance, reciprocity with unilateralism or even antagonism, and care with imposed responsibility or obligation. While it brings individuals, languages, cultures, and communities closer together, translation also exposes differences in power, interests, expectations, goals, and values.

The organisers of this conference hope to attract contributions about a variety of aspects of the dyad ‘translation’ and ‘friendship’, both theoretical in nature and applied. All language combinations and historical periods are welcome. We particularly encourage submissions that examine the affinities, tensions, contradictions, and potential conflicts between these two forms of personal human relationships.

Languages of the conference: English and French

Keynote speakers

Christian Berner, Université Paris Nanterre

Anthony Pym, Universitat Rovira i Virgili

Advisory committee

Susan Bassnett, University of Glasgow

Laura Brignoli, IULM, Milano

Larisa Cercel, Leipzig University

Iulia Cosma, Padua University and West University of Timișoara

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Fransiska Louwagie, University of Aberdeen

Elpida Loupaki, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

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Eriko Sato, Stony Brook University, New York

Organisers

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Please send 300 to 350-word abstracts accompanied by a bionote of about 100 words to elisavet.hatzidaki@umpv.fr by Monday 30 November 2026

Notification of acceptance: Friday 29 January 2027

Registration fee: 100 euros. Student rate: 50 euros